

Modern Thinking on Harmonious Coexistence between Man and Nature

-- Taking the policy of returning farmland to forest as an example

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Abstract: Modernization of harmonious coexistence between man and nature is the basic strategy of my country's modernization at present, and it is also an important part of my country's ecological civilization construction. Its core content is how to deal with the relationship between man and nature, economic development and environmental protection. Taking the policy of returning farmland to forest as an example, under the condition that the ecological environment in the deforested areas has been significantly improved, this paper verifies the development concept of harmonious coexistence between man and nature through the definition of the concept, development process and benefit evaluation of the policy. Finally, it is found that the policy has a positive impact on the identity transformation, economic conditions, living environment and working methods of farmers who have returned farmland to forest, thus proving that this concept is worthy of long-term implementation by our party and people.

Keywords: Harmonious Coexistence between Man and Nature, Modernization, Returning Farmland to Forest.

1. Introduction

The modernization of harmonious coexistence between man and nature, as the guiding ideology of the construction of socialist ecological civilization with Chinese characteristics in the new era, is the concrete manifestation of the Marxist view of nature and development in contemporary China. The development process of the Communist Party of China on ecological civilization construction has been continuously deepened with the understanding of the relationship between man and nature. It has experienced the coordinated development of man and nature, the sustainable development of man and nature, the harmonious development of man and nature, and finally to the current modernization of harmonious coexistence between man and nature, creating a new path for Chinese-style modernization and a new form of development and progress of human civilization.

In China, the development history of ecological civilization construction is also a history of thinking and understanding of the relationship between man and nature. The understanding of the relationship between man and nature can be roughly divided into four stages. In primitive society, human beings were born in nature. As human beings were still uncivilized at that time, their thoughts were still in chaos. They could not explain some strange things and phenomena in nature, so people gave them a mysterious color in their explanation, and attributed them to the products formed by forces beyond nature. And as the productivity level was very low at that time, people drew vitality from nature, lived off the land and water, so people maintained a respectful attitude towards nature at that time. In agricultural society, people's understanding of nature gradually deepened. People at that time used land as a means of production, which led to the development of production tools and promoted the progress of productivity. The progress of productivity led to the change of production relations. People's production and living units gradually changed from the original clan tribes to individuals or families where men farmed and women wove. People's

understanding of natural laws also continued to deepen, and they discovered the changes of the four seasons and solar terms. People's attitude towards nature was more like the coordinated development of man and nature. In industrial society, people entered the steam age. The great progress of productivity led to drastic changes in production relations, and the power of the bourgeoisie gradually grew. In order to obtain huge profits, they continuously obtain a large amount of natural resources such as land energy, climate energy and bioenergy from nature. The natural carrying capacity and resilience are constantly declining. The continuous expansion of desires has distorted people's understanding of the relationship between man and nature. The capitalists completely disregard the ecological environment and sacrifice nature for money. This runs counter to the Marxist dialectics of natural development. The result is that the ecological environment has been severely damaged, and nature has begun to take a special "revenge" on mankind, and people's quality of life has also been seriously affected. In contemporary society, due to the serious damage to the natural environment, people have begun to re-examine the relationship between man and nature. When people are still thinking about whether to protect the environment or to develop the economy, General Secretary creatively proposed the "development concept of "green water and green mountains are gold and silver mountains". Environmental protection and economic development are not contradictory, but complementary and even mutually reinforcing. Under the implementation of many policies, the ecological environment has improved and people's lives have become more affluent. This article will take the policy of returning farmland to forests and its implementation effect as the object of investigation to help us deepen our understanding of the modernization of harmonious coexistence between man and nature.

2. Basic Definition of the Policy of Returning Farmland to Forest

The project of returning farmland to forest is one of the six major forestry projects in China and one of the ten major forestry ecological projects in the world. The policy of returning farmland to forest is based on the protection and improvement of the ecological environment. It involves the planned and step-by-step cessation of farming on sloping farmland that is prone to soil erosion, and the planting of trees in accordance with the principle of "right tree for the right site" to restore forest vegetation. Returning Farmland to Forest Project The construction includes two aspects: one is to return sloping farmland to forest; the other is to afforest barren hills and wastelands suitable for forestry. For a long time, people have blindly reclaimed wasteland for farming and exchanged forests for grain under the conditions of backward economy and low agricultural productivity, resulting in soil erosion, sand invasion and retreat, ecological deterioration, and frequent disasters, which have become a major concern for the Chinese nation. The severe ecological situation has attracted great attention from the Party and the government. The requirement of returning farmland to forest was put forward in relevant documents in 1949. In the late 1990s, General Secretary Jiang Zemin issued a great call for "rebuilding beautiful mountains and rivers, and Premier Zhu Rongji proposed comprehensive measures of returning farmland to forests, closing mountains for afforestation, using grain as relief, and individual contracting". In 2000, the Central Government's Document No. 2 and the Western Region Development Conference of the State Council listed returning farmland to forest as an important part of the western development. Subsequently, the returning farmland to forest project was formally included in the Outline of the Tenth Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China, making it another historic measure for China's ecological construction at the turn of the century after the natural forest protection project, and realizing a historic transformation from deforestation to returning farmland to forest.

Since 2008, the project of returning farmland to forest has stopped the stage of full-scale expansion and entered the stage of consolidating the results of the project construction. Although the project of returning farmland to forest is an ecological construction project initiated by the state, the main participants of the project are farmers in the vast areas of returning farmland to forest. Therefore, farmers are the key factor in consolidating the results of the project, and whether farmers are willing to actively maintain the results of the project depends directly on the long-term benefits brought to them by returning farmland to forest. The two major policy goals of returning farmland to forest are to improve the ecological environment and improve the quality of life of farmers. With the continuous advancement of the policy of returning farmland to forest, the quality of life of farmers who have returned farmland to forest will also change. The improved ecological environment can improve the welfare of farmers. At the same time, the welfare level of farmers who have returned farmland to forest can also have a certain effect on the ecological environment. After returning farmland to forest, the ecological environment has been significantly improved, but whether the welfare level of farmers who have returned farmland to forest has improved remains to be considered. This article discusses the modernization of

harmonious coexistence between man and nature from the perspective of the quality of life of farmers after the implementation of the policy of returning farmland to forest.

3. The Development of the Policy of Returning Farmland to Forest

Before the implementation of the policy of returning farmland to forest, the country's development orientation was in a "pendulum state", swinging between giving equal importance to ecological and economic development and being oriented to economic construction. In 1949, the "Provisional Regulations on the Protection and Development of Forestry (Draft)" of the Northwest Shanxi Administrative Office mainly stipulated that the land that had been reclaimed and the barren forest land should be returned to the forest, and some small plots of land in the forest should also stop being cultivated and returned to the forest. After the reform and opening up, due to the low level of productivity at that time, everything was based on economic construction, which led to the expansion of cultivated land and economic forest area and the destruction of the ecological environment. At this time, the idea of returning farmland to forest had spontaneously emerged, but it did not rise to become the national will, but the state also issued some laws and policy documents. The evolution of China's policy of returning farmland to forest can be roughly divided into the following stages.

The first stage, the pilot stage (1999-2001). In the second half of 1999, in order to implement the spirit of General Secretary Jiang's instruction to "recreate a beautiful northwest region", Premier Zhu Rongji successively inspected five provinces and regions in the west and proposed comprehensive ecological construction measures of "returning farmland to forest (grass), closing mountains for afforestation, using grain instead of relief, and individual contracting". The central government's understanding of the role and status of returning farmland to forest has risen to an unprecedented height, with characteristics such as government promotion, planned control, economic incentives, and ecological priority. Therefore, a pilot project was carried out in Sichuan, Shaanxi, and Gansu for a period of 3 years. According to the problems existing in the pilot project, the goals, principles, scope, organizational management, planning, afforestation management, inspection and acceptance, and financial and grain subsidies of returning farmland to forest were clarified, supplemented and improved, and determined in the form of legislation. Article 25 of the Regulations for the Implementation of the Forest Law of the People's Republic of China in 2000 clearly stipulates that on slopes above 25°, farmland should be gradually returned to forests and grasses for planting. In March 2000, the forestry planning department issued the Notice on the Pilot Demonstration of Returning Farmland to Forests (Grass) in the Upper Yangtze River and the Upper and Middle Yellow River in 2000. Since then, the pilot of returning farmland to forests has begun, and the pilot has been set in 13 provinces, and then in June, another 4 provinces were added. Subsequently, the National Development and Reform Commission and the Food Bureau issued the Interim Measures for the Supply of Grain in the Replacing of Sales and Returning Farmland to Forests and Grasses, which clearly stipulated the standards and deadlines for the supply of grain for returning farmland to forests, and then issued the Several Opinions on Further Improving the Pilot Work of Returning

Farmland to Forests and Grasses, which clearly stipulated various policies and measures for returning farmland to forests. Subsequently, Sichuan, Shaanxi and Gansu provinces immediately took the lead in carrying out the pilot demonstration of returning farmland to forests, marking the beginning of the pilot demonstration stage of returning farmland to forests.

The second stage is the stage of comprehensive construction and consolidation (2002-2014). The teleconference on returning farmland to forest held on January 1, 2002 officially announced the full launch of the returning farmland to forest project, expanding the scope to 25 provinces, autonomous regions and the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, and guaranteeing the implementation of the returning farmland to forest project through laws. In the stage of comprehensive construction and consolidation, the returning farmland to forest policy was refined and clarified in a bottom-up manner, mainly based on the implementation of the pilot policy and existing problems, and was stipulated in the form of laws and regulations. In December 2002, the "Regulations on Returning Farmland to Forest" was issued to regulate it in the form of special regulations. Since then, my country's returning farmland to forest has officially entered the legal track. At the same time, my country has also issued some supporting laws and regulations and normative documents to comprehensively regulate it.

The third stage is the consolidation and improvement stage (2014~). In order to continue to consolidate the achievements of the first round of returning farmland to forest and smoothly promote the implementation of the new round of returning farmland to forest, the State Forestry Administration and other departments of the State Council issued the "Overall Plan for the New Round of Returning Farmland to Forest and Grassland" in 2014. The "Plan" stipulates that the new round of returning farmland to forest mainly adopts a bottom-up returning farmland model, with the government as the leader and farmers voluntarily applying for returning farmland. This provision is contrary to the provisions of the first round. It can be seen that the new round of returning farmland to forest is improved and developed on the basis of the first round. In 2015, the State Council issued the "Overall Plan for the Reform of the Ecological Civilization System", which included returning farmland to forest in the content of ecological civilization construction. In 2016, the Ministry of Finance and other 8 departments issued the "Notice on Expanding the Scale of the New Round of Returning Farmland to Forest and Grassland". The issuance of the "Notice" means that my country's returning farmland to forest has entered a new stage. The areas of returning farmland to forest are divided into key areas, and the areas are transferred to poor mountainous areas, river sources, ecological functional areas, etc., which are highly targeted. It also stipulates that sloping farmland will be converted into non-basic farmland, and the compensation standard has been adjusted to 1,500 yuan/mu for returning forest and 1,000 yuan/mu for returning grass, which will be paid in three phases. In 2016, the Regulations on Returning Farmland to Forest were revised to better adapt to the implementation of the new round of returning farmland to forest.

4. Benefit Evaluation of the Policy of Returning Farmland to Forest

4.1. The Impact of the Policy of Returning Farmland to Forest on the Identity Transformation of Farmers Who Have Returned Farmland to Forest in the Returning Farmland Area

The policy of returning farmland to forest has reduced the area of arable land and pasture, liberated a large number of surplus rural labor in the deforested areas, and enabled this group of people to enter the city. In general, this group of people has achieved a change in employment status and household registration status. Most of them have achieved a change in employment status, that is, from farmers to employees in the secondary and tertiary industries; but only some of the farmer elites have achieved a change in household registration status. There are two paths to change household registration status: one is that farmers have a place in the city due to their outstanding ability, and have achieved a change from agricultural household registration to urban household registration; the other is that some farmers who have returned to farming have cultivated their children into elites, and after their children have achieved success, they have achieved a change from migrant workers to citizens with the help of their children.

4.2. Impact of the Policy of Returning Farmland to Forest on the Economic Status of Farmers in the Deforested Areas

After the implementation of the policy of returning farmland to forest, the economic situation of farmers has changed dramatically, which can be measured from two aspects: income and consumption. From the perspective of income, the income sources of farmers in the deforested areas are composed of property income, transfer payment income, operating income and wage income. Among them, property income is the part of the income that is realized by the appreciation of the wealth they own; transfer payment income is the income brought by the central transfer payment policy such as the ecological compensation mechanism for returning farmland to forest; operating income includes agricultural income, economic forest planting, individual business income and other income; wage income is the income created by the surplus rural labor force that flows into the city after the implementation of returning farmland to forest. After the implementation of the policy of returning farmland to forest, agricultural income will decrease, but income from other aspects will increase at different levels. From the perspective of consumption, the measurement of economic conditions cannot be carried out only from the absolute income, but also depends on its purchasing power.

4.3. Impact of the Policy of Returning Farmland to Forest on the Living Environment in the Areas of Returning Farmland to Forest

The impact of the policy of returning farmland to forest on the human settlement environment can be measured mainly from two aspects: natural environment and residential environment. From the perspective of natural environment, the policy of returning farmland to forest reduces the area of

arable land, allows pastures to recuperate, and increases the area of forest and grassland. At the same time, it can increase the oxygen content in the western region, especially the plateau region, to a certain extent, beautify the natural scenery in the western region, and improve the natural environment. From the perspective of residential environment, the policy of returning farmland to forest has led to a large number of surplus rural laborers pouring into cities. Even if they return to the countryside at a specific time point, they live in their workplaces for most of the year. Most of the people in the countryside are elderly, women and children. Therefore, the population density in rural areas has decreased, which will increase the per capita enjoyment of rural public goods to a certain extent.

4.4. Impact of the Policy of Returning Farmland to Forest on the Working Style of Farmers in the Deforested Areas

The policy of returning farmland to forest has an impact on the working methods of farmers in the deforested areas in three main aspects. First, the policy of returning farmland to forest has liberated a large number of surplus rural labor in the deforested areas, allowing this group to enter the city and engage in the secondary and tertiary industries, thereby adjusting the industrial structure. Second, the income obtained from engaging in the secondary and tertiary industries will be higher than the agricultural income. Therefore, the demonstration effect of the group pouring into the city will cause farmers who still have land in the countryside to give up farming and move to the city to work. In this way, the rural land will be idle. In order to avoid this phenomenon, the state has proposed a policy of separation of three rights. In order not to lose personal benefits, these farmers who have land use rights will transfer their land use rights, thereby increasing the land transfer rate in rural areas. Third, the work place of farmers pouring into the city has changed, which has changed the rural production radius. The rural production radius refers to the time and space distance from the place of residence to the place of employment of rural residents. In an agricultural society, the rural production radius is the farming radius; with the diversification and changes of farmers' employment, the connotation of the rural production radius has gradually diversified.

5. Conclusion

Facts have proved that achieving modernization does not mean that economic development and environmental protection must give up one of them. How to achieve both at the same time? General Secretary 's proposal to achieve modernization of harmonious coexistence between man and nature has given the answer to this question. The development concept of "clear water and green mountains are gold and silver mountains" may be an unquestionable truth in the hearts of our generation, but this is the result of continuous exploration and practice by generations of Chinese Communists. While improving the ecological environment, the policy of returning farmland to forest has had a huge positive impact on the identity transformation, economic conditions, living environment and working methods of farmers who have returned farmland, and has improved the welfare of farmers who have returned farmland. General

Secretary once pointed out: "In the face of unprecedented difficulties in global environmental governance, the international community must, with unprecedented ambition and action, jointly discuss ways to respond to the challenges of climate change, jointly seek ways for harmonious coexistence between man and nature, be brave in taking responsibility, work together, and jointly build a community of life between man and nature." We must handle well the relationship between man and nature, man and man, man and society, economic construction and environmental protection, and between countries. We must always adhere to green development, people-oriented, and systematic governance, promote the coordinated development of material civilization, political civilization, spiritual civilization, social civilization, and ecological civilization, take the Chinese path of modernization with a green background, establish a green, intelligent, low-pollution, and low-consumption human civilization, and ultimately achieve modernization in which man and nature coexist in harmony, and contribute Chinese wisdom and Chinese solutions to the Chinese path of modernization and the new form of human civilization.

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